Great Days
by Joseph Goebbels

We look back on a historic week. Last week in this space, we discussed a certain clique of ignorant and narrow-minded people who have no sense for the great era in which we live, who lose their nerve and their inner and outer composure at any difficulty. It makes no difference what is happening. They simply lack open mindedness, and in comparison to those who are alert to what is happening can only be thought poor and pitiable.

Last Sunday we took the opportunity to discuss the shortage of coffee, and expressed our displeasure with such people. One regrets that they live in our era, because they really do not deserve it. Our appeal to national discipline sounded rather odd as the growing rumblings from Czecho-Slovakia were increasing by the hour, throwing all of Europe into tension and uncertainty. Last Sunday and Monday, the various political conflicts began to intensify. The German people began to pay attention. In the past six years, we Germans have become especially sensitive to foreign issues. Even the slightest reaction in the international arena causes our people to pay particular attention to foreign affairs. That was the case here as well. From Monday on, and deep into the night, the people of Berlin gathered at the Wilhelmplatz and outside the Reich Chancellery to await events. That is always a sign that the people are beginning to pay increased attention to world events. They had the impression that storm warnings were out, and they were right. As always, the nation waited in disciplined quiet for the Führer's decisions and conclusions.

Tuesday was a nerve-wracking day for all the relevant offices in the Reich capital. Hour by hour, the former Czecho-Slovakia was disintegrating into its various parts. The blunder of the Treaty of Versailles existed only to form a military base against Germany. It was near collapse. It was no longer able to fulfill the tasks given it by the Western European democracies in the fall of 1938. In Bohemia, they wanted to establish "an advanced outpost against the Germanic bloc." As recently as 27 September 1938, the French newspaper "Epoque" wrote: "Czecho-Slovakia is certainly an important strategic card in France's game, particularly for the air force. Bohemia's wide spaces are a wonderful base for the air force. If the Bohemian bases were at France's disposal and were occupied by the Russians, the Allied squadrons would be in the position to strike at the heart of Germany."

This military mission for Prague's chauvinists was now obsolete. Czecho-Slovakia's hour had come. New forces had appeared in Europe, and they were ordering things in this area by different laws. The inner logic of the situation resulted in the collapse of the rotten structure artificially established and held together by Versailles. But new life sprang from the ruins. The old era was replaced by a younger and more dynamic era.
As State President Hacha came to talk with the Führer shortly after midnight on Tuesday evening, the future of the ancient German lands of Bohemia and Moravia was already determined. It was determined by historical necessity, which was speaking a clear and unmistakable language.

A night of nerve-wracking tension passed. As the Führer finished his proclamation to the German at 5 a.m., an historical decision had taken place. Shortly after, radio stations told the world that the historic provinces of Bohemia and Moravia had returned to the federation of the Greater German Reich. State President Hacha himself had asked the Führer to assume the protection of these provinces, noting that he "was confidently placing the fate of the Czech people and nation in the hands of the Führer of the German Reich."

The so-called Czecho-Slovakia ceased to exist. In a single night, a nation vanished that in reality had never been a nation. France and England were presumably ready to bring Europe into a crisis in fall 1938, perhaps even to plunge it into war for the state. On 4 September 1938, the London "Observer" had written that the British people were ready to stand against the New Order "like a block of steel, and an overwhelming alliance would stand at its side, as in the last war." Similar voices came from Paris, and had there not been more reasonable, clear-sighted, and clear-thinking statesmen in England and France, the gambling politicians of democracy would have undoubtedly succeeded in provoking an unpredictable catastrophe for the sake of this artificial state. But now the house of cards has fallen.

The night from Tuesday to Wednesday also was a clear affirmation of the correctness of the policies Chamberlain and Daladier had followed in the Czech question, which explains the total lack of reaction in the Western democracies to the collapse of the former Czecho-Slovakia. Naturally the professional warmongers in the hostile German-hating lying press are stuttering out a few emotional diatribes and impudent insults against Germany, but none of them is of any political significance.

Nothing can change the facts, and it is evidence of the growing realization in the Western democracies that no significant figure is raising any objection. The justice of Germany's position is too clear to be disputed. On Wednesday, the Führer hurried to Bohemia and Moravia to be with the troops marching in, and that evening the Führer's standard flew over the Castle in Prague. The German people held its breath. Even the last man knew that history was being made. An historic act of symbolic significance was ending a process that could have led to war or peace. The Führer's clarity, courage, and intelligence are the reason that the signs pointed to peace, not to war.

The Reich Protectorates of the historic provinces of Bohemia and Moravia were proclaimed. It was the conclusion of a historical process that had begun around the year 1000, when the earliest chronicler of Bohemia, the Slav Comas, already thought Bohemia a part of Germany. Through the years, Bohemia and Moravia were bound by feudal ties and other connections to the German Reich. Prague itself has the oldest German university. The most beautiful buildings of the city were built by Germans: the cathedral, the Charles Bridge, the Teyn and Nicholas churches. The prosperity and economic successes of these peoples and provinces have always been strongest when they were under the protection of the Reich.

Now it continues. Central Europe has won back peace. An system has been created in which the stronger of the two neighbors is eager for peace and the weaker has accepted the protection of the stronger, not the other way around. It is a thoroughly reasonable and logical arrangement of the relations between the two peoples. If the weaker has power, it will inevitably attempt to oppress the stronger and weaken its sense of nationhood, since it is the only way to ensure its position. The stronger, on the other hand has no such need. Because it is stronger, it can afford to be generous and to establish a system that gives justice to both nationalities. That is what has happened here. It is a truly historic decision, and the German people have accepted it as such.

The situation leads us to speak once more to the complaining know-it-alls who at the moment have the good sense not to say anything in the face of the facts. These know-it-alls are always prominent when the nation faces a crisis or when a shortage surfaces. In the face of major successes, they fade into the background, since there is no chance to criticize the National Socialist government or the National Socialist worldview. They cannot understand

why we National Socialists, and the entire German people, love our era. This historical event gives us an opportunity to tell them: We love this era because history is being made. Our hearts beat faster because it has a manly character, because it more important than the temporary difficulties that are part of every great era.

We simply cannot understand how some people in the midst of this exciting age can be bothered only be a temporarily reduced coffee ration, or reduced critical freedom, or dogmatic or religious hair-splitting. We love our era because it gives us tasks and challenges, because in it a man has given the German nation life again after many decades of stagnation. We love our age because in a fortunate hour problems have been solved that had existed for many hundreds of years, because these problems, so at any rate it seemed, were solved with an almost playful ease that seemed to lay observers almost necessary or self-evident.

This era is our era. We give it the full strength of our heart and mind because it eliminates reasons for conflict and brings about true peace, because it is a proving ground for real talents and manly abilities, because this era is Germany's great opportunity in which we can help as obedient servants of the Führer. We love this era because its successes and victories lead us to forget all the related troubles and discomforts, because it has taught us to despise a life of safety, ease, and comfort, because the greatness of the era leads us to dare to take on big and apparently unsolvable problems.
We National Socialists say openly that we have only pity and contempt for those ignorant people who have no sense at all of the historic era in which we live.

How impoverished must the hearts and minds of those be who cannot recognize such an age, who cannot comprehend the great triumphs happening around them because foolish trifles like a temporary shortage of coffee cause them discomfort. We are not living in their era. They did not bring it about, nor do they have any influence on it. But we are bound to the era by the laws we follow. Wherever the Führer may act, we stand by him in loyal obedience and thank fate that it gave us such a great era. We experience the era with all our being, and in its fortunate hours are always overjoyed that we are the children of this era.